REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing amendments, and reexamination and reconsideration of the subject application, and in light of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

The courtesy of the examiner during the telephonic interview conducted today is gratefully appreciated.

Amendments

The independent claims 1 and 9, and dependent claim 10, have been amended to better define the structure of the seal mesh, especially as relates to the structure being compressed, and to provide the alleged process limitations as structural limitations. Further, the limitations of claims 2, 11, and 12 have been incorporated into the respective claims from which each depended.

The eight withdrawn method claims divided from the elected claims have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Three new dependent claims recite the lip or flange 115 (*e.g.*, page 6, line 26, and Fig. 3).

No new matter is added.

Rejetions under 35 U.S.C. §103

The various rejections of the pending claims as obvious over Aoyama in view of Weil, and optionally in further view of Jaraczewski or Usher or Sawada, are respectfully traversed.

Aoyama discloses a cushion having a rolled structure that can be compressed into a form as shown in Figs. 1a-1c (col. 5, ln. 7-16). The structure has a knitted inner portion and an outer portion of yarns that "engage with only selected loops formed by the [mesh]" (col. 4, ln. 56-57). Thus, the yarn is woven into the mesh. When two knitted units are used (Fig. 5; col. 5, ln. 19-28), the outer unit is knitted of an "inorganic" material, such as asbestos (col. 5, ln. 52-53).

Weil discloses a woven material 20 (bottom of column 2) separated by a heat retarding layer such as foil from an outer woven material 40 (col. 3, last

paragraph). The outer member is made of thin wire "so that essentially all of the outer surface of preferred metal foil layer 30 is exposed on the outside of the sleeve." (Col. 3, ln. 60-61.)

The claims as now amended require that the soft outer wire be flattened so that it has a greater surface area and acts as a baffle (application at page 5, ln. 10-13). Aoyama provides no teaching of a flat wire, and Weil's teaching of a thin wire having almost no surface area (to allow the metal foil to protrude) teaches away from the claimed invention.

The only rejection of claims 2 or 11 (now incorporated respectively into claims 1 and 9; claim 12 being allowable) is over the further combination of Jaraczewski, which discloses a "braided" material (col. 4, ln. 56). A braided structure is flexible, as is a woven structure. However, a knitted structure is not as flexible and the wires, being interconnected, cannot move past each other, and thus the structure is stronger (whether or not compressed). The Jaraczewski structure is not compressed and is intended to be flexible because it is for a catheter, non-analogous art in the context of the claimed seal.

The heat-shielding conduit of Weil is unlike the seal of Aoyama. Even if one were to use the outer wire of Weil in Aoyama (which teaches using two knitted meshes), the outer wire would not be flat, and the resulting device would still have an inorganic yarn sewn therein (col. 4, ln .25-29). The "consisting essentially of" language is intended to exclude non-metallic components such as the asbestos of Weil or the plastic of Jaraczewski's catheter.

Accordingly, it would not have been obvious to make a combined wire mesh seal element having a flattened wire covering the outside, the flattened wire providing improved sealing properties because of increased surface area, and thus the present rejections should be withdrawn.